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SUBJECT: BMENAI: MFA BMENAI COORDINATOR AND NEA DAS CARPENTER DISCUSS  
DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE DIALOGUE AND FUTURE PLANS

REF: ANKARA 0782

Classified By: Consul General David Arnett for reasons 1.4 (b & d)

1. (C) Summary: In a cordial June 21 meeting with NEA DAS Scott Carpenter in Istanbul, MFA Coordinator for the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENAI) Ambassador Omur Orhun reiterated Turkey's strong support for the initiative and its determination to express that support through concrete contributions beyond its role in the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD). Orhun highlighted again GOT sensitivity about being an actor, not a target in this initiative, and expressed appreciation for public remarks to that effect in recent regional meetings. He also expressed support for the Foundation for the Future concept, and for the idea of expanding BMENAI mechanisms to include such countries as Spain and Norway. DAS Carpenter underlined the importance the POTUS attaches to the DAD. End Summary.

2. (C) In a cordial June 21 meeting on the margins of a Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD) event organized by TESEV (septel), NEA DAS Scott Carpenter met with Ambassador Omur Orhun, the Turkish MFA's Coordinator for the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENAI). Accompanied by Levent Gumrukcu and Reha Keskindepe of the MFA's Policy Planning Department, Ambassador Orhun began by seeking DAS Carpenter's read-out on the pace of developments and expectations for the future related to the DAD and other initiatives that came out of the June 2004 G-8 Summit at Sea Island.

3. (C) DAS Carpenter, highlighting the increased impetus of reform efforts since Secretary Rice came on board, outlined some of the bureaucratic changes that had taken place within the USG to mobilize and coordinate resources to promote reform, and shared that we are bilaterally developing country strategies while continuing to compare notes with European allies on developments in the region. The U.S. would like to see the Forum for the Future institutionalized, he said, adding that the November 2005 meeting in Bahrain would provide a good opportunity for creating something like a "G-8 Plus" mechanism that could perhaps bring in additional countries with an interest in reform in the region, but no venue for participating. Spain and Norway were two countries discussed as possibilities.

4. (C) Of all the important initiatives emanating from Sea Island, DAS Carpenter stated that the DAD was of most importance to President Bush. The USG welcomes ideas on how to expand the initiative and illustrate that it is a priority, he said. DAS Carpenter and Ambassador Orhun discussed concept papers circulating on two ideas related to the Forum for the Future: the Foundation for the Future and the Fund for the Future. (Note: Orhun had received copies of both concept papers from the Turkish Embassy in Washington and had reviewed them prior to the meeting with DAS Carpenter. End note.) Orhun stated that he needed to consult further with colleagues to fully understand the Fund idea, but that he thought the Foundation for the Future was a very good idea. "The more [the USG] lessens its imprint, the more there will be a sense of ownership in the region," he said. DAS Carpenter explained that before looking for concrete financial support for the ideas, the USG is engaging in dialogue in countries including Bahrain, Jordan, Egypt and Morocco to seek ideas and buy-in to the concept, but would be interested in discussing the idea in more detail when Orhun visits Washington in ten days' time.

5. (C) Ambassador Orhun thanked DAS Carpenter for his views, and stated that Foreign Minister Gul's opening remarks at the TESEV conference clearly illustrate Turkey's support for the BMENAI. Turkey supports the process not because the U.S. wants it to, he said, but because it is in Turkey's interest to secure a stable environment in the region. He added that Turkey's support would not be limited to words nor to organizing activities within the DAD framework, but, with the limited means at its disposal, Turkey's support would extend to financial contributions and other initiatives. Orhun mentioned Turkey's sensitivity regarding being considered a partner and facilitator, rather than a target, of the BMENAI. He stated that the GOT had been pleased with public statements by U.S. officials to this effect, pointing specifically to the meeting of Education Ministers in Amman. He underlined his support for the idea of reaching out to countries such as

Norway and Spain for participation in BMENAI.

16. (C) Orhun stated that the June 20-21 TESEV-organized event was a "new model" for meetings, as it combined NGO and governmental participation. This meeting, he said, is primarily an "NGO" meeting with government participation, whereas in the future the DAD could also organize "governmental" meetings with NGO participation. Within such a model, he said, "NGO meetings" could perhaps come up with platforms or specific appeals, which "governmental meetings" could then consider and address.

17. (C) He went on to outline several concrete ideas that he and his team had generated regarding where Turkey might make contributions or organize activities within the DAD framework. Turkey's Chambers of Trade and Industry, for example, recently submitted a proposal to the OECD to conduct a study on Turkey's "democratic model" of Chambers of Commerce organization, and on the views of partners in the BMENA region as to its suitability for duplication there. He also stated that Turkey could make contributions to education efforts in the region, especially regarding literacy. Finally, he mentioned specific areas for future concentration: the media, the functioning of parliaments, and local government issues. On the latter two issues he suggested trips by BMENA officials to Turkey to study Turkey's experience in these areas. Finally, Orhun suggested the establishment of a Democracy Scholarship, and pointed out that this idea might fit within the framework of the Foundation for the Future.

18. (C) Orhun also broached the idea of reaching out to the Turkish Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC) about the BMENAI. He asserted that the OIC was in the process of reforming itself, and while he was unsure about how much progress it would make in a meeting in Yemen later this month, he could talk to his Turkish colleague about reform issues. DAS Carpenter responded that while many feel that "the more the merrier," there are certain caveats, and that the unlimited integration of actors into the process could have drawbacks. Orhun and Carpenter agreed to address this issue again at a later date.

19. (C) Comment: Ambassador Orhun will be traveling to the U.S. at the end of June, which may be a good time to follow up with him on the Fund/Foundation concepts. There were no surprises in the tone or content of the meeting, but it was a useful consultation and sets the stage for future meetings between Orhun and Department officials in the framework of our enhanced consultations with the MFA on the BMENAI and DAD. End Comment.

10. (U) This message has been cleared by DAS Carpenter in Istanbul.  
ARNETT